

Panel reviews proposals to remap districts

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BATON ROUGE — State lawmakers Thursday got their first looks at proposals for redrawing new election districts for Congress, the Public Service Commission and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Rep. Rick Gallot, D-Ruston, chairman of the House and Governmental Affairs Committee presented to the panel maps showing some shifting in PSC and BESE districts but major changes in congressional districts to accommodate the state losing one of its seven congressmen. Population shifts in the United States and lack of growth in Louisiana forced the state to surrender a seat in the 435-member U.S. House of Representatives.



Gallot

In all of the proposed districts, newly seated U.S. Rep. Jeff Landry, R-New Iberia, has to run against a more experienced incumbent if he wants to stay in Congress.

In two out three of Gallot's proposals, Landry is pitted against U.S. Rep. Charles Boustany, R-Lafayette, in a district that roughly runs from Lafourche Parish to Calcasieu Parish. But in one of the drafts, he would run against U.S. Rep. Bill Cassidy, R-Baton Rouge.

Gallot offers what Shreveport demographer Elliott Stonecipher calls an "I-20 District" that runs across the top of the state from Caddo to East Carroll Parish. It does not force any north Louisiana incumbents to compete in the same district.

Gallot said that statistically, the two north Louisiana districts in his proposals have zero variance from the ideal population needed for a congressional district.